

No. 99-01

April 7, 1999

Subject:

Jet Fuel Contamination

Distribution:

All DOI Aviation Activities

Discussion: A recent fuel sample taken from a DOI aircraft revealed jet fuel contaminated with an unknown substance, possibly dyed diesel fuel or hydraulic fluid. The color of the contaminated fuel was described as a lightly tinted red or pink. Jet fuels meeting industry standards are characterized as either clear or straw yellow colored. Changes in color from clear or straw yellow are often an indicator of fuel contamination.

Recommendations: In addition to procedures contained in the *Aviation Fuel Handling Handbook*, the following steps may be used to identify contaminated fuel:

1. Visually check fuel for clarity, brightness, and color. Lack of brightness or clarity could indicate suspended water. Do not use off color fuel unless laboratory tests indicate it meets specifications and is safe for use in aircraft.
2. Smell fuel for the distinct odors of diesel and gasoline. Jet fuel contaminated by microbes often gives off a sulfur-like smell.
3. Touch fuel for the oily feel of jet fuel verses the dry-cool evaporative feel of gasoline.

Finally, if any doubt exists regarding a fuel, the fuel should be isolated, labeled "contaminated," and reported. Under no circumstances should suspect fuel be used or dispensed until it can be positively identified and quality tested.

If you have any questions regarding this subject please contact your OAS Area/Regional office:

Alaska Regional Office (Anchorage)	907-271-3700
East Area Office (Atlanta)	770-458-7474
West Area Office (Boise)	208-334-9310
West Area Office (Phoenix)	602-640-2633

Robert Galloway
Aviation Safety Manager